

O 191030Z DEC 04  
FM AMEMBASSY RIYADH  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2377  
INFO ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE  
CHUSMTM RIYADH SA  
COMUSNAVCENT  
COMUSCENTAF SHAW AFB SC

UNCLAS RIYADH 006449

PLEASE PASS TO S/CT

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [SA](#)

SUBJECT: SAUDI ARABIA: 2004 ANNUAL TERRORISM REPORT

REF: STATE 245841

11. (U) Per reftel, post submits the following language for use in the 2004 Patterns of Global Terrorism Report. Embassy POC for this report is Julie Eadeh (eadehja@state.gov).

12. (U) During the year, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia continued to support the global war on terror. Al Qai'da, in the first half of 2004, kept up a steady tempo of attacks--surpassing the variety and lethality of the previous year. This trend contrasted sharply with the second half of 2004 in which the network remained largely on the defensive, and until December, was unable to mount an operation. In 2004, terrorists killed many foreigners and citizens, including 6 Americans, in attacks throughout the country. The attacks consisted of kidnappings, targeted shootings, bombings, and beheadings. The media reported widely on each of the attacks and the subsequent government crackdown, leading to a widespread acceptance that terrorism is a serious threat in the Kingdom, not only to foreigners, but to Saudis as well.

13. (U) In response to the increasing wave of terrorist violence in the Kingdom, the Saudi government continued its pursuit of al-Qai'da and other terrorist operatives. While experiencing casualties among security forces, Saudi authorities aggressively pursued terrorists and achieved successes. The Government continued to publicize counterterrorism efforts. Saudi authorities conducted high-level dialogues with U.S. officials on counterterrorism efforts and responded positively to requests for heightened security in facilities around the country.

14. (U) Saudi Arabia continued a hearts and minds campaign in the war against terror. During the year, Saudi authorities aired militant confessions and interviews with fathers of wanted men as part of a campaign to rally the public against radicals who carried out attacks in the Kingdom. In June, the Grand Mufti Shaykh Abd al-Aziz Al al-Shaykh issued a fatwa condemning terrorist acts and calling on citizens to report "saboteurs and anyone planning or preparing to carry out terrorist acts to the concerned authorities." Also in June, six senior religious leaders issued a statement denouncing terrorist attacks as "heinous crimes" and the Crown Prince delivered a speech emphasizing the important role every Saudi must play in combating terrorism.

15. (U) As Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques in Mecca and Medina, the Saudi government worked to undermine the use of Islam to justify terrorist attacks. The authorities worked during the year to delegitimize and discredit those who use Islam to justify terrorism. Senior members of the Royal Family emphasized that the fight against terror is paramount to state security and the well-being of all Saudis. There were television broadcasts during the year discussing the costs of terrorism and the importance of security from an Islamic perspective. The Government also focused on internal social, political, and economic reforms as a method to combat underlying roots of terrorism.

16. (U) During the year, the Government launched intensive searches and counterterrorism sweeps in the country, often

involving thousands of Saudi security personnel. On June 23, Crown Prince Abdullah issued an ultimatum to terrorists: surrender in 30 days or suffer the full force of the state. On June 29, Prince Nayif Security Academy began training ARAMCO employees on counterterrorism measures. On the same day, the Ministry of Interior announced a 60 day pardon for persons to surrender unlicensed weapons. During the year, the media reported that Saudi border guards seized large amounts of explosives and small arms on their Yemeni and Iraqi borders.

¶7. (U) The judicial system remains capable of dealing with the terrorist threat as outlined in the U.N. Counterterrorism Committee Report. The Saudi government detained those found responsible for terrorist attacks, and in some cases, executed terrorists. The Government generally seeks extradition of their nationals involved in terrorist acts. The Saudi government continues to press Iran to extradite terror suspects believed to be held there.

¶8. (U) During the year, the Government engaged in close counterterrorism cooperation with the U.S., and other international efforts. The Government forbade the collection of cash donations at mosques or commercial establishments. In addition, the Saudi government restricted certain deposit, withdrawal, and out of country financial transfers of charities. The media reported during the year that Saudi banks froze more than 250,000 accounts for noncompliance with anti-money laundering and terrorist finance laws. In August, Crown Prince Abdullah told the foreign press that Saudi Arabia has made significant progress in decapitating the terrorist leadership in the Kingdom and is focusing on hunting down the individuals comprising the terrorist cells. At the United Nations General Assembly in September, the Saudi government announced that it would hold an international conference to combat terrorism in February 2005.

¶9. (U) A 2003 anti-money laundering and anti-terrorist financing law criminalized money laundering and terrorist financing. The law also established a single Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU), as required by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), to collect and analyze suspicious financial transactions and places stringent "Know Your Customer" requirements on the banking system. In July, the FATF released its 15th annual report which noted that the Saudi government "has taken action to increase requirements for financial institutions on customer due diligence, established systems for tracing and freezing terrorist assets, and tightened the regulation and transparency of charitable organizations." After an October ultimatum, the Government closed down the al-Haramain Foundation. During the year, the Saudi government requested that the UN 1267 Sanctions Committee add names to its consolidated list.

¶10. (U) Saudi Arabia has signed nine of the 12 international conventions and protocols relating to terrorism and is party to six.

OBERWETTER